United Nations CEDAW/SP/2004/4

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Meeting of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
Thirteenth meeting
New York, 5 August 2004

Report of the meeting of States parties

1. The thirteenth meeting of States parties was called to order on 5 August 2004 by Charles Chesterfield Burnett (Barbados), who acted as the temporary Chairperson.

2. The Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women made a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General, in which she drew attention to the progress made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in the implementation of its major responsibilities under the Convention and the Optional Protocol and in enhancing its working methods.

3. The Director observed that since the twelfth meeting of States parties, on 29 August 2002, the Committee had held four sessions. It had considered the reports of 32 States parties and adopted country-specific concluding comments on each of these. It had also adopted general recommendation 25 on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention. The Committee had taken action on the first communication submitted under article 2 of the Optional Protocol and continued its work under article 8 of the Optional Protocol. She drew attention to the Committee's guidelines for reporting and the model communications form for those submitting petitions under the Optional Protocol, which were made available to the meeting of States parties for ease of further use and distribution (see CEDAW/SP/2004/INF.1*).

4. Turning to the Committee's working methods, the Director drew attention to the serious constraints the Committee faced in discharging all its responsibilities in a timely and effective manner. In order to cope with its workload, the Committee was submitting a request for an extension of its annual meeting time to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. Specifically, the Committee was requesting authorization for an additional week of meeting time at its sessions in July 2005 and in January and July 2006. In order to achieve a long-term solution for coping with its workload, the Committee was requesting the Assembly to authorize it to hold, as of 2007, three annual sessions of three weeks each, with a pre-session working group for each session.

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5. The Director noted that 217 reports under article 18 of the Convention were overdue. The total number of States parties was now 177, 63 States parties had ratified the Optional Protocol and 44 States parties had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Committee's meeting time.

6. Following the statement of the Director, Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana) was elected Chairperson of the Meeting. Abdul-Dayem M. Mubarez (Yemen), Helene Bakker (The Netherlands), Andriy Nikitov (Ukraine) and Marco Balerezo (Peru) were elected Vice-Chairpersons. The provisional agenda (CEDAW/SP/2004/1) was adopted.

7. In accordance with article 17, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the Convention, the States parties elected by secret ballot 11 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, of whom 4 were current members proposed for re-election. The four current members were Françoise Gaspard (France), Maria Regina Tavares da Silva (Portugal), Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling (Germany) and Heisoo Shin (Republic of Korea). The new members were Mary Shanthi Dairiam (Malaysia), Magalys Arocha Dominguez (Cuba), Tiziana Maiolo (Italy), Silvia Pimentel (Brazil), Glenda P. Simms (Jamaica), Anamah Tan (Singapore) and Zou Xiaoqiao (China). The list of candidates and their curricula vitae were contained in document CEDAW/SP/2004/3. After the announcement of the results, the representative of Senegal made a statement.

8. The meeting had before it document CEDAW/SP/2004/2, updating information contained in a similar report prepared for the twelfth meeting of States parties (CEDAW/SP/2002/2). The document had been submitted pursuant to article 28 of the Convention, which provides that the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession. The article also provides that the Secretary-General shall inform all States of any withdrawals of reservations relating to the Convention.